HELISOMA AMMON (Gould)

BY JUNIUS HENDERSON

In The Nautilus, XLVII, 89–90, Pl. 9, fig. 4, 1934, I stated that I had seen no specimens of this species from the "Low Colorado Desert," the type locality, and quoted a letter from Dr. Pilsbry, thus: "I have been in doubt about *Pl. ammon* Gld., if the assigned locality is correct." Later that year Mrs. Henderson and I visited that region and found fossil (probably Pleistocene) specimens two miles east of south from Indio and a few immature ones near Kane Spring. I have also found in the University of Colorado Museum, catalogued as *Planorbis trivolvis* Say, fossil specimens from "seven miles south of Mecca—Yeager." I obtained from Charles C. Cass fossil specimens from Daggett, California. I found in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Chace, fossil specimens from Indio, and fresh shells from an irrigation ditch five miles north of Lancaster, obtained by Stanley C. Field in 1930. We have fresh specimens from various stations in San Joaquin Valley and near Watsonville.

The type locality given by Gould is "Cienaga Grande, the Colorado Low Desert, T. H. Webb and W. P. Blake." He reported it also from Ocoya Creek. Blake mentions Ocoya (Ocayo) or Posey's Creek. There is a Poso Creek on one map, Posey Creek on another, north of Bakersfield. I have found nothing in the literature or on any map indicating just where Cienaga Grande is. Those more familiar with the history and geography of the region than I disclaim any knowledge of the place. The name means a big spring or big marsh. Blake mentions a Big Spring, probably the same place. Possibly it is in the area now covered by the Salton Sea, the remnant of the big lake formed by the last overflow of the Colorado River into the basin a number of years ago. The bleached shells of this and other species found in the sands of the basin, some of them very abundant, were doubtless deposited here when the basin was occupied up to the well-marked water line about the margins, by a great lake, "Ancient Blake Lake," which at its highest stage was kept fresh by overflow for a considerable period. The species reported from the basin are: *Anodonta californiensis* Lea,

Helisoma ammon (Gould), *Physa humerosa* Gould, *Amnicola longinqua* Gould, *Hydrobia protea* (Gould), *Fluminicola avernalis* Pilsbry and *F. a. carinifera* Pilsbry. This is the type locality of most of them and while the specimens scattered over the floor of the basin are fossil, several of them are elsewhere found living.

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S CONCHOLOGICAL TEXT

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In 1839 appeared a little book entitled, "The Conchologist's First Book :/ or,/ a system/ of/ Testaceous Malacology/ arranged expressly for the use of Schools,/ in which/ the animals, according to Cuvier, are given/ with the shells,/ a great number of new species added,/ and the whole brought up, as accurately as possible, to the present condition of the science./ By Edgar A. Poe/ with illustrations of two hundred and fifteen shells,/ presenting a correct type of each genus." Illustrated with miniature colored plates, it discussed the anatomy and shells of many genera of invertebrates, included a list of species for each genus (with American forms starred), and ended with a several-page glossary of a very technical sort. Of the book Sherborn says, "A piracy, based on the plates of T. Brown, Conch. Text Book, the story of which is told in International Mag., Oct. 1850."

Violation of ethics in the publication of the book would not nullify the statement, "presenting the correct type of each genus." This could make the book an important source of type-designations. Copies both of the first and second editions (1843) and of Brown (edition 4, 1836) being available in the Stanford Library, I have made a careful study of the work, with the conclusion that it can be dismissed so far as nomenclatural novelty is concerned. The "correct type" refers not to the text, where a few monospecific genera could have been construed to have types designated, but to the illustrations. The figures are not in any way tied to species-names. They illustrate genera, and are too small and unsatisfactory for specific identification.